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Yapacani Town and Plan 3000 in Santa Cruz Benefit from Free Judicial Services

As a result of the joint efforts made by the governments of Bolivia and the United States, through the Bolivian Ministry of Justice and USAID, an Integrated Justice Center in Villa Belén de Yapacaní and a shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence in Ciudadela Andrés Ibáñez, in Plan 3000 district, were inaugurated in the department of Santa Cruz on June 6.

Integrated Justice Center in Yapacaní

Within the framework of support provided to the Bolivian Government's National Development Plan, USAID financed the creation of the Integrated Justice Center of Yapacaní, which included the construction of infrastructure, purchase of equipment, training of volunteers, hiring of three professional staff members, and the provision of continuing technical attendance.

The U.S. Government provided approximately \$85,000 for infrastructure and \$15,000 for equipment. Additionally, USAID will fund the first year of operations with approximately \$25,000 that will be used to pay technical consultants: a coordinator, a conciliator and a sponsor.

The Integrated Justice Center of Yapacaní will offer the following free-of-charge services: legal advice on legal rights and procedures; alternative conflict resolution; counseling and sponsorship to facilitate access to formal justice and human rights advocacy services, including access to public prosecutors and defense attorneys.

With the opening of the Integrated Justice Center of Yapacaní, there are already 11 such centers operating nationwide thanks to USAID's support: six in El Alto; one in Plan 3000 (Santa Cruz); one in Chimoré (Cochabamba); one in the Max Paredes District of the city of La Paz; and one in Coroico (Yungas region of La Paz).

Plan 3000 Shelter

This shelter is an annex to the existing Integrated Justice Center in Plan 3000 district and it will seek to provide assistance to women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. USAID's financial support is estimated at approximately \$45,000 in infrastructure and \$20,000 in furniture and equipment.

This center can accommodate up to 24 people and offers three areas of assistance: 1) residence and administrative services; 2) institutional services provided by the municipality, and 3) a venue to conduct hearings. The services will be provided by six civil employees, volunteers and interns. Other services to be provided include: psychological counseling, civil registry, Children's Advocacy Office, and integrated legal services (for senior citizens). The inauguration ceremonies were presided over by Celima Torrico, Bolivian Minister of Justice and Peter Natiello, Director of USAID Bolivia.